

THE DEBATES

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF BRITISH GUIANA.

OFFICIAL REPORT

OF
PROCEEDINGS AT THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FOURTH
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY. 18TH DECEMBER. 1947.

The First Session of the Fourth Legislative Council of British Guiana was opened in the Council Chamber, Guiana Public Buildings, on Thursday, 18th December, 1947, with the customary formalities and ceremonials.

PRESENT :

The President, His Excellency the Governor, SIR CHARLES CAMPBELL
WOOLLEY. K. C. M. G., O. B. E., M. C.

The Honourable the acting Colonial Secretary, Mr. D. J. PARKINSON.

the acting Attorney-General, Mr. E. M. DUKE.

the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDAVID, C.B.E.

C. V. WIGHT, O.B.E., (Western Essequibo).

F. J. SEAFORD, C.B.E., (Nominated).

Dr. J. B. SINGH, O.B.E., (Demerara-Essequibo).

H. N. CRITCHLOW, (Georgetown South).

Dr. J. A. NICHOLSON, (Georgetown North).

T. LEE, (Essequibo River).

C. P. FERREIRA, (Berbice River).

” V. ROTH, (Nominated).

T. T. THOMPSON, (Nominated).

W. J. RAATGEVER, (Nominated).

G. A. C. FARNUM, (Nominated).

J. P. COGHLAN, (Demerara River).

” D. P. DEBIDIN, (Eastern Demerara).

✓ The Honourable J. FERNANDES, (Georgetown Central).

Dr. G. M. GONSALVES, (Eastern Berbice).

” Dr. C. JAGAN, (Central Demerara).

” W. O. R. KENDALL, (New Amsterdam).

” C. A. McDOOM, (Nominated).

✓ ” Rev. A. T. PETERS. (Western Berbice).

✓ ” W. A. PHANG, (North Western District).

” G. H. SMELLIE, (Nominated).

Clerk of the Council—Mr. A. I. Crum Ewing.

Official Reporters—Messrs. H. A. Grimshaw,
F. A. Leubin and
R. M. Holder, (Acting).

His Lordship the Bishop of Guiana (Rt. Rev. Alan J. Knight, M.A., LL.B.) read prayers.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT administered the Oath of Allegiance to the Members of the Council in their order of seniority.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

INCREASED COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE TO PENSIONERS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER communicated the following Message:—

MESSAGE No. 1

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have the honour to refer to Resolution No. XXIV. passed by the Legislative Council on 10th November, 1944, approving of the payment of war bonus to all pensioners of this Government wherever resident (including Widows' and Orphans' Fund Pensioners) whose pensions do not exceed \$720 per annum on the scale set out below, with effect from 1st January, 1944 :—

15% on the first \$240 per annum
10% on the next \$240 per annum
5% on the next \$240 per annum

with a minimum bonus of \$3 per month; provided that the bonus shall not apply to those pensioners who are re-employed by Government.

The question of providing a more adequate cost of living allowance embracing all pensions in place of the

present war bonus paid has been carefully considered by Government and, with the advice of the Executive Council, it has been decided to invite the Legislative Council to approve of the payment of the following cost of living allowance to pensioners of this Government wherever resident (including Widows' and Orphans' Fund pensioners) with effect from 1st January, 1947 :—

20% on pensions up to \$720 per annum

Flat rate of \$144 per annum on pensions exceeding \$720 per annum, with a minimum cost of living allowance of \$48 per annum.

The above proposal is estimated to cost approximately \$77,000 per annum or an increase of \$35,000 on the voted provision for 1947.

I accordingly invite the Council to approve of effect being given to th

posal and to authorise the necessary supplementary provision for the current year.

C. C. WOOLLEY,
Governor.

Government House,
British Guiana,
8th December, 1947.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND BOARDS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY communicated the following Message :—

Honourable Members of Council,

I have the honour to inform you that I propose to continue, and in somewhat extended form, the system of appointment of Legislative Council Advisory Committees introduced by my predecessor in 1943. The purpose and functions of these Committees were fully explained in Sir Gordon Lethem's personal directive to the Chairmen, dated the 1st of November, 1943, copies of which have been circulated to all Members, and I need not, therefore, enlarge on this subject here. The Committees have unquestionably been of great assistance to the Council and to the Government, and it seems to me that they are very necessary if the voluminous business of the Council is to be transacted expeditiously and efficiently. The Committees will cover the activities of all the major public service departments of Government and will be under the chairmanship in each case of an Unofficial Member of the Council, although not necessarily a Member of the Executive Council.

I propose that the scope of the Public Works Department Advisory Committee should be extended to embrace the whole of the activities of that Department including the Drainage, Irrigation and Sea Defences Branch. The statutory Boards with respect to the control of drainage, irrigation and sea defences appointed under the related Ordinances will, of course, continue to function.

I further propose that two new Advisory Committees be appointed, namely :—

(a) An Advisory Committee for Communications (including telecommunications). The work of this Committee will of course have to be correlated on the one hand with that of the statutory Advisory Council of the Transport and Harbours Department and on the other hand with that of the Public Works Advisory Committee in regard to road communications.

(b) An Advisory Committee for the Interior, the scope of which will include all matters affecting the development of the Interior and particularly the work

of the Forestry and Mines Departments. This Committee will replace the previously existing body which had included non-members of the Legislative Council, as I feel that it is desirable that the Interior Advisory Committee should be constituted on the same basis as the other Legislative Council Advisory Committees. This Committee may well wish, and it will of course be open to it, to seek the advice of persons not serving on the Committee whenever this is considered desirable.

I do not propose to re-appoint an Advisory Committee to the Bureau of Publicity and Information as I do not consider that the circumstances which justified the appointment of this Advisory Committee obtain any longer.

I accordingly propose, subject to their willingness to serve, to appoint the following Members of Council to be Chairmen and Members of these Committees :—

Advisory Committee for Agriculture and Fisheries

Honourable John Fernandes, Chairman,
Honourable F. J. Seaford, C.B.E.,
Honourable T. Lee,
Honourable G. A. C. Farnum,
Honourable J. P. Coghlan,
Honourable C. A. McDoom,
Director of Agriculture (Deputy Chairman).

Advisory Committee for Communications

Honourable G. H. Smellie, Chairman,
Honourable H. N. Critchlow,
Honourable T. Lee,
Honourable W. J. Raatgever,
Honourable John Fernandes,
Honourable Dr. G. M. Gonsalves,
Postmaster General (Deputy Chairman).

Advisory Committee for Education

Honourable C. V. Wight, O.B.E.,
Chairman,
Honourable Dr. J. A. Nicholson,
Honourable T. T. Thompson,
Honourable D. P. Debidin,
Honourable A. T. Peters,
Honourable G. H. Smellie,
Director of Education (Deputy Chairman).

Advisory Committee for the Interior, Forestry and Mines

Honourable V. Roth, Chairman,
Honourable T. Lee,
Honourable C. P. Ferreira,
Honourable John Fernandes,
Honourable W. A. Phang,
Honourable G. H. Smellie,
Commissioner of the Interior (Deputy Chairman).

**Advisory Committee for the Medical
Department**

Honourable Dr. J. B. Singh, O.B.E.,
Chairman,
Honourable Dr. J. A. Nicholson,
Honourable W. J. Raatgever,
Honourable Dr. G. M. Gonsalves,
Honourable W. O. R. Kendall,
Director of Medical Services, (Deputy
Chairman).

**Advisory Committee for the Public
Works Department**

Honourable F. J. Seaford, C.B.E.
Chairman,
Honourable H. N. Critchlow,
Honourable C. P. Ferreira,
Honourable T. T. Thompson,
Honourable G. A. C. Farnum,
Honourable J. Fernandes,
Director of Public Works (Deputy
Chairman).

These Committees will of course be in addition to the Standing Committee of Finance, provided for under the Standing Rules and Orders, which consists of all Unofficial Members of the Council under the chairmanship of the Treasurer. The Advisory Committees will thus in some measure be Sub-Committees of the Finance Committee and should be of the greatest assistance to that body.

In addition to the above Committees, it is also necessary for me to appoint Members of Council to the various statutory bodies mentioned below, and to them I propose to appoint the following :—

**Berbice Lutheran Fund
(Chapter 236)**

Honourable Dr. J. A. Nicholson.
Honourable W. O. R. Kendall.

**Central Board of Health
(Section 3 of Ordinance No. 15 of 1934).**

Honourable Dr. J. B. Singh, O.B.E.,
Honourable J. P. Coghlan,
Honourable T. T. Thompson.

**Advisory Committee to the Development
Trust Fund
(Section 8 of Ordinance No. 7 of 1937.)**

Honourable C. V. Wight, O.B.E.,
Honourable Dr. J. B. Singh, O.B.E.

**Drainage and Irrigation Board
(Section 4 of Ordinance No. 25 of 1940).**

Honourable F. J. Seaford, C.B.E.,
Chairman.
Honourable C. P. Ferreira,
Honourable D. P. Debidin,
Honourable Dr. G. M. Gonsalves.

**Education Committee
(Section 51 of Chapter 196).**

Honourable C. V. Wight, O.B.E.,
Honourable A. T. Peters.

**Forest Trust Committee
(Section 29 of Cap. 176).
(Section 2 of Ordinance No. 9 of 1931).**

Honourable C. P. Ferreira,
Honourable W. A. Phang.

**Local Government Board
(Ordinance No. 14 of 1945).**

Honourable H. N. Critchlow.
Honourable C. P. Ferreira,
Honourable G. A. C. Farnum.

**Mitchell Fund Trustees
(Section 3 of Ordinance No. 30 of 1937).**

Honourable Dr. J. B. Singh, O.B.E.,
Honourable H. N. Critchlow.

**Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Advisory
Committee to the Prescribed Authority.
(Ordinance No. 21 of 1946).**

Honourable G. H. Smellie, Chairman,
Honourable D. P. Debidin,
Honourable Dr. G. M. Gonsalves.

**RICE MARKETING BOARD
(Ordinance No. 5 of 1946.)**

Honourable John Fernandes,
Honourable C. A. McDoom.

**Sea Defence Board
(Section 4 of Ordinance No. 11 of 1933).**

Honourable C. V. Wight, O.B.E.,
Honourable Dr. J. B. Singh, O.B.E.,
Honourable D. P. Debidin.

**Transport and Harbours Advisory Council
(Ordinance No. 26 of 1946).**

Honourable G. H. Smellie, Chairman,
Honourable H. N. Critchlow,
Honourable T. Lee,
Honourable W. J. Raatgever,
Honourable John Fernandes.

**Trotman Fund Trustees
(Section 2 of Chapter 248).**

Honourable C. V. Wight, O.B.E.,
Honourable D. P. Debidin.

**Board of Directors, New Widows' and
Orphans' Fund.**

Honourable C. V. Wight, O.B.E.,
Honourable T. Lee.

I trust that the Members selected will be prepared to serve on these Advisory Committees and Boards, and I should be grateful if they would inform the Clerk of Council of their decision as soon as possible, as it is necessary that these bodies begin to function without delay.

C. C. WOOLLEY,
Governor.

Government House.
British Guiana,
17th December, 1947.

PAPERS LAID.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following documents :—
The Report of the Director of Medical Services for the year 1946.
The Report of the Main Development Committee.
Rules of Court (Amendment No. 1), 1947.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE TO PENSIONERS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice of the following motion :—

That, with reference to His Excellency the Governor's Message No. 1 dated the 8th of December, 1947, this Council approves of the payment of a cost of living allowance to pensioners of this Government as set out in the Message and authorises the necessary supplementary provision for the current year to give effect thereto.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bills :—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1934, with respect to the amount of compensation and the liability of insurers for payment."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1931, with respect to Tonnage, Light and Pilotage Dues and the power to make regulations."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Trading with the Enemy Ordinance, 1939, by the inclusion of the amendments thereto which were effected by Defence Regulations."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Shops Ordinance, 1944, with respect to the opening and closing hours of shops."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to regulate the entry of aliens into the Colony to make provision for the registration of aliens and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance with respect to Immigration and for purposes connected therewith."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision as to the immunities and capacities of international organisations of which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and Foreign Governments are members; and to confer immunities and privileges on the staffs of such organisations and representatives of member Governments and in respect of premises and documents of such organisations."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the New Building Society Ordinance, 1940, with respect to the powers and accounts of the Society, the appointment of Auditors, and unclaimed amounts payable on Bond Certificates and deferred shares."

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

BAKERIES (HOURS OF WORK) ORDINANCE.

MR. CRITCHLOW gave notice of the following motions :—

THAT WHEREAS the Bakeries (Hours of Work) Ordinance No. 4 of 1946 only provides for the Commissioner of Labour or someone authorised by him to have the right of entry and to prosecute bakeries that violate the aforesaid Ordinance;

AND WHEREAS experience has shown that it is necessary that this right should also be given to the Commissioner of Police or someone authorised by him;

RESOLVED that the Bakeries (Hours of Work) Ordinance No. 4 of 1946 be amended to provide also for the Commissioner of Police or someone authorised by him to have the right of entry and the right to prosecute bakeries that violate the Ordinance referred to above.

RENUMERATION FOR UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS.

WHEREAS it is desirable that Unofficial Members of the Legislative and Executive Councils of this Colony be adequately remunerated for their service;

AND WHEREAS the Unofficial Members of the Legislative Councils of the Island of Trinidad and other West Indian Colonies are remunerated by their respective colonies;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Council approve of the payment of remuneration of \$1,680 per annum to Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council, and of \$2,400 per annum to Unofficial Members of the Executive Council, for their services, with effect from 1st January, 1948.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Government take the necessary steps to legalise the payment of remuneration to Unofficial Members in accordance with the rates set out above.

FORTY-TWO HOUR WORKING WEEK
LEGISLATION.

THAT WHEREAS recent Trade Union and Labour Conferences in Europe and the West Indies have urged the introduction of social and industrial legislation in the interest of the working class;

AND WHEREAS the World Federation of Trade Union Conference held in London in February, 1945, in its declaration on Post War Reconstruction and immediate Trade Union demands, stated:—

"This Conference further emphasises that increasing production fully justified, and indeed demands, the extension of the leisure hours of working people. Accordingly, it demands the speedy and universal introduction of a **maximum working week of forty hours without loss of pay.** This demand is made without prejudice to the claim for a **shorter working week by trade unions in countries where economic and industrial development makes this possible and desirable.** Every worker should be guaranteed an annual holiday or vacation at full pay of at least **two weeks' duration with appropriate arrangements for casual workers.** All **public holidays should be paid for.**"

AND WHEREAS the Caribbean Labour Congress held in Barbados in September, 1945, in its report on Social and Industrial Legislation, resolved:—

"Congress desires to invite the Colonial Governments in the Caribbean area to introduce legislation providing for a **maximum working week of 40 hours where the principle is not applied, and that in so doing there should be no reduction of wages.**"

AND WHEREAS it is desirable that the Government of British Guiana should give favourable consideration to the recommendation of these Conferences;

AND WHEREAS the present tendency is for a gradual reduction in hours of work by stages towards the goal set above;

RESOLVED that this Honourable Council recommend to Government the need for the early introduction of legislation to limit the normal working week to forty-two hours.

UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE.

Mr. LEE gave notice of the following motions:—

WHEREAS certain members of the 1941 Franchise Commission recommended that the introduction of universal adult suffrage should be postponed for a period of five years, while other members thought that universal adult suffrage should have been introduced in 1944;

AND WHEREAS universal adult suffrage has already been introduced in the other two first class Colonies of Jamaica and Trinidad, in the West Indies;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Secretary of State for the Colonies be respectfully requested to instruct the Governor of this Colony to introduce an amendment to the Legislative Council (Elections) Ordinance, 1945, thereby giving the

right to every male and female over the age of 21 years, resident in the Colony, to be registered as a voter.

WHOLLY ELECTED LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS certain members of the 1941 Franchise Commission recommended that the 14 Electoral Districts should be re-distributed to allow of 24 Elected Members", as detailed on page 24 of the Report of the British Guiana Franchise Commission, 1941, Legislative Council Paper No. 10 of 1944:

AND WHEREAS the time has arrived for the Constitution of British Guiana to be changed so as to provide for a wholly elected Legislative Council based on Universal Adult Suffrage, and the attainment of complete self-government in internal affairs within five years:

BE IT RESOLVED that His Excellency the Governor be respectfully requested to appoint a representative Commission to consider the whole question and to report before June, 1948.

THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

The PRESIDENT addressed the Council as follows:—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—

While this, the first meeting of the Fourth Legislative Council of British Guiana may not be altogether a historic occasion, it certainly marks an important milestone in constitutional progress in the colony. Constituted as it now is, this Council reflects the effect of a greatly extended franchise which has accorded to the people greater voice and greater choice in the selection of persons to represent them. It is note-worthy that in the recent general election over 70% of the voters exercised the franchise, a percentage which, I think, compares favourably with that in any democratic country and is evidence of a lively and, I trust, sustained interest by the population in public affairs. That interest, it is gratifying to observe, was very marked in the rural areas. It remains for you, the chosen, to prove to the electors in the course of the next five years, the wisdom of their choice, and the justification for a still further widening of the franchise.

It is with regret, however, that here and today I must refer briefly to reports which do not appear to be without some foundation that during the elections a good deal of racial feeling was engendered in

some quarters. That, you will all agree with me, is very much to be deplored and I trust that now the excitement of the elections is over it will disappear, and disappear once and for all. If it does not there can be no question whatever that it will be a major hindrance to progress constitutionally and otherwise in this colony. Not that I believe it to be either deep-seated or widespread among the people themselves. On the contrary, the different communities have been and are, generally speaking, living in amity and concord together and as good neighbours and I must warn in no uncertain terms those who, for reasons best known to themselves, seek to disturb that happy relationship. As I said when I arrived in the colony, no matter to what community we may belong let us all, first and foremost, be good Guianese. Let what different characteristics we have be a source of our strength not weakness, and all for the common good.

To all Elected Members I offer my congratulations on their successful appeal to the wider electorate, and to newcomers a very warm welcome from those of us present who sat in the old Council. I also extend an equal welcome to those Nominated Members whose appointments have been approved by His Majesty the King. In recommending them for appointment, and it has been no easy task, my sole consideration has been the public interest. I need hardly remind them that they are in no sense Government Members, and that they enjoy the same liberty as Elected Members to speak and to vote as they see fit, and as their consciences dictate. Equally, they are under the same obligation well and truly to serve the public and the best interests of the colony as a whole.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

As you are aware the general election also involves fresh nominations to the Executive Council, and I have pleasure in announcing the appointment, with the approval of His Majesty, of the following Unofficial Members to serve on that Council:—

The Hon. C. V. WIGHT, O.B.E.,
 The Hon. F. J. SEAFORD, C.B.E.,
 The Hon. Dr. J. B. SINGH, O.B.E.,
 The Hon. H. N. Critchlow, and
 The Hon. Dr. J. A. Nicholson.

I also wish to announce that I have

appointed the Honourable Mr. C. V. Wight, O.B.E., to be Deputy President of the Council. In doing so may I once again pay tribute to the invaluable services to this country over the last forty years, of our first Deputy President, Sir Eustace Woolford, whose wise counsel and mature experience will be much missed in our deliberations.

As to Advisory Committees of the Council, a system introduced by my predecessor, and which I propose should be continued and in a somewhat extended form, I am addressing you in a separate Message which has been laid on the Table this morning.

Your first act as Members of this Council, and a necessary one to make your membership effective, has been to take the Oath of Allegiance. In taking it you have, I trust, been mindful and always will be mindful of the responsibility for the good government of British Guiana which is now in so large a measure yours, and which indeed has been imposed upon you in seeking and accepting membership. It is a very real responsibility and never greater than at this juncture in the colony's history. When I arrived in the colony some eight months ago, and the recollection of the general welcome and promised co-operation I then received on all sides is still very much with me, I was everywhere reminded, and in no uncertain terms, that I had come here at a very critical time in the colony's affairs. I preferred myself to call it a challenging time, but whether it be critical or challenging or both, what was said to me applies equally to you. That circumstances are peculiarly difficult at this present time must be apparent to you all. You have been called to serve a British Guiana faced, as is the rest of the Empire and the greater part of the world, with an economic crisis of the first magnitude, the full blast of which is still to come, and which will leave no one untouched. Our foremost and most formidable task is to pull the country through this crisis, and for some time to come this must be our main pre-occupation. Let there be no mistake about that. We are faced with a drastic curtailment of our imports, more particularly from hard currency countries and with the urgent necessity

to expand production of our own food supplies; we shall be faced in consequence with serious short-falls of Customs revenue and will find ourselves, temporarily at least, in a tight corner to maintain our public and social services at the level we would wish and have strived for. It is not a situation which we have created for ourselves, nor can we be blamed for it, but we can rightly be blamed if we do not do everything in our power to find a remedy. In many respects that remedy lies very largely in our own hands, and there can be no question as to the kind of effort which is required of everyone of us if we are to pull through. I put it to you in the simplest possible terms, namely, that it is imperative for us by our own efforts to raise the level of our national output and income. Economically, we must stand more firmly on our own feet and develop to the utmost our own resources. My recent pronouncements in this connection are still fresh in your minds and I do not propose this morning to repeat what I then said and what must now be this Council's main concern and prime responsibility. That we can increase our level of output agriculturally, industrially and by development of the interior is indisputable. We must exploit to the full our resources on land, in the rivers and in the sea, and by use of the air.

TEN-YEAR PLAN.

As I have said on another occasion, the trail has been blazed for us by the work of the last Council, in preparing for us as it has done, a Ten-Year Plan for the social and economic development of the colony. That is its legacy to this new Council, and I commend the report, copies of which have been distributed to each of you today, to your close study and most earnest consideration. The report is very comprehensive covering as it does every aspect of our social and economic life. If carried through to the full it will involve expenditure totalling some 26 million dollars, of which 12 million will be provided under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act by His Majesty's Government, subject to its approval of the Plan, \$4 million will come from our accumulated (surplus) and unappropriated loan balances and some \$10 million will have to be raised by means of new public loans. Your approval in principle of the

implementation of this report will be sought separately and as soon as possible. Action upon some sections of it seems to me to be urgently necessary to combat the crisis and I may well consider it desirable to ask that those sections be given your prior consideration.

But this Plan, as you know, is in no sense entirely new in that the figures I have quoted include over \$9,000,000 to be spent on schemes or projects which have already been approved. Some of these are now under way: there is the Bonasika Irrigation Scheme which, despite many and continuing difficulties with equipment, is now in its last main stage, namely that of constructing the High Level canal; there is the Torani Canal Scheme and the related Block III development project, both also labouring under shortage of engineering equipment and difficulties with present second-hand equipment, but notwithstanding which over 3,000 new acres on Block III have been planted with rice this year and for the first time although the main works are not yet there to afford proper water control and security. These two major irrigation schemes when completed will bring under rice cultivation no less than 12,000 acres, as well as, providing necessary cattle pastures. The new rice mill at Mahaicony-Abary with a milling capacity of five tons per hour will begin milling next month, thereby not only increasing the colony's milling capacity but also conserving valuable by-products for the use of our livestock industry. Then there is Queen's College, a first priority project recommended by the Development Committee, and the foundations for which are now being dug. The new therapeutic x-ray department placed by the committee as next in priority and which will indeed be a boon is also under construction and the new equipment for it is about to be shipped from England. The programme for new elementary school buildings is proceeding surely if slowly for lack of materials. During the last two years and despite all difficulties seven new schools accommodating nearly 1,400 children have been constructed and three further schools accommodating over 750 children are now in course of erection. As you will see from the Report there are also many other important projects on which we have embarked.

One of the advantages and indeed one of the prime purposes of a Development Plan of this sort is that it enables the colony to take a bird's eye view of its existing and prospective commitments on development account. Individually perhaps few projects except the very largest engineering works and building schemes appear to be financially formidable: and we know that each protagonist of this or that particular scheme feels in all sincerity that his is the most important immediate need and figures that it will not cost very much really in comparison with existing expenditure. It is however in the aggregate that all the projects assume such formidable financial dimensions, and in that way alone is it possible to see them in true perspective. So when, as will no doubt be the case, the present Plan is criticised here and there for what it leaves unsaid, undone or unprovided for, let us remember that it is not a schedule of what is desirable—that was attempted on a departmental level two years ago and the result would have required over one hundred million dollars—it is something more realistic than that. It is in fact what the members who framed it felt was practicable: there is hardly one of them I imagine who would not have wished, as I could have wished, to make further additions here, there and elsewhere to the plan, but it is the duty of all of us in this Council who share in the responsibilities of Government to relate our policy to the colony's financial and administrative resources. Services or projects started in haste and abandoned in the first breath of financial adversity are for the most part money thrown away: ambitious plans exceeding the capacity of the colony to assume are as easy to frame as they are embarrassing to discard when the folly of over-ambition is made clear in the cold light of financial circumstance. It is for this reason I have urged and will continue to urge the need to increase our national output and income as a condition precedent for much that we desire and urgently require in the way of social reform and progress which is the aim of all good government. It is not so much the initial capital involved but the annually recurrent expenditure also involved thereafter:— that is the red light to be watched. We must not build palaces we cannot afford to live in and maintain.

INCREASED PRODUCTION.

It may well be thought that an economic crisis and a Ten-Year Development Plan hardly go hand in hand, and in a measure it may be true that the execution of the plan will be hindered by the crisis if only for lack of imported materials. Be that as it may one thing is certain beyond all question, and it is that the crisis can only be overcome by speedy and resolute action on those parts of the Plan which will lead to increased production both for local consumption and, I must emphasise, for export. Unlike our wartime "Grow More Food Campaign" which was a short-term policy to meet an emergency and obliged us to grow more food at any cost, we now have to plan to increase production on a strictly economic and permanent basis—a very different thing—and to meet very different circumstances. A permanent improvement in the economy of the country and in a more diversified form is now our objective. In one of my last addresses to the old Council I gave the targets for increased production in all our major industries, and those targets still hold good. It is now for us to take aim. In so far as fertilisers and machinery and other essential stores are necessary to achieve the target figures, and it is lack of them that is the principal obstacle, the Government is leaving no stone unturned to get them; and so essential are they that hard currency, scarce as it is, must be found to buy them if needs be and to the extent available. I am already in touch with the Secretary of State regarding the urgent necessity of obtaining more agricultural machinery for rice development and a representative of the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme is in the United States at the present time for the same purpose. As to the campaign for increased food production I will shortly seek your approval for a long-term guarantee of purchase of food crops at prices considerably in advance of those given under the present three-year guarantee, but prices which should not involve any increases in the present cost to the consumer. The Government will also propose to you shortly the appropriation of a considerable sum of money for what I would term "increased production loans" to producers which they should find no difficulty in repaying provided, on their part, they cultivate their land intensively and efficiently as I must urge them to do. I cannot emphasise too

strongly this proviso. To bolster up with financial assistance uneconomic and inefficient cultivation will do no one any good. Neither will guaranteed prices over an extended period avail unless there is a steady and sustained increase in production of the right kind. I want the farmer to make a further study of what can best be grown on his land and how best to grow it, and he must be prepared, if he is to receive assistance, to grow what we most need and what will be adequate substitutes for expensive imported foodstuffs from hard currency countries which have had to be subsidised at a colossal cost, and which this country can no longer afford: a rising tide of subsidisation approaching, as it was before the recent curtailment, some \$3,000,000 a year or nearly as much as our total annual expenditure on Education and Medical services combined—a point worthy of reflection. Surely it would be far better to eliminate the need for these imported foodstuffs in so far as we are able, thereby saving hard currency dollars for what is absolutely essential, and for what we cannot produce ourselves and must import. Not only that, but we shall be in a much better position financially to assist in bringing about increased local production and the establishment of new industries; at the same time we shall, so to speak, be keeping the money in the country and for the country's good. Subsidisation is in other words a stop-gap policy, involving the expenditure of huge sums, which confers no permanent benefit on the colony. I ask Honourable Members to reflect on this. I shall be reminded that that is all very well, but what about the cost of living for the poorer people if subsidisation is withdrawn, and it is a very relevant reminder. The answer is that for this very reason it has not been wholly withdrawn and must be continued for the present at a still embarrassingly high figure; but equally it must be recognised as a purely temporary expedient and limited to what we can afford.

There is much more that I should like to say to you and to the farmers on this vital question of increased production, but time will not permit me to do so this morning. I hope however to broadcast a special message to farmers in the New Year.

CONCESSION TO NEW INDUSTRIES.

As regards new industries, and these include mining and forestry development and the development of secondary industries, the Government will seek your approval to a substantial concession in regard to income tax, and is also prepared to grant relief from Customs duties on imported capital equipment in order to stimulate the growth of these new industries and give them practical assistance in the early and risky stages of their establishment. Here again we must accord priority for hard currency expenditure as may be necessary.

I cannot leave the subject of development of our country and its resources without mention of the Settlement Commission under the Chairmanship of Sir Geoffrey Evans whose report may have an important bearing on the general question. The Commission has now completed its enquiries in so far as British Guiana is concerned, and leaves our shores tomorrow. We look forward with lively interest to receiving in due course the Commission's report which, after its intensive study of conditions here, will no doubt be of great value and importance to us.

COLONY'S FINANCIAL POSITION.

I must now turn for a moment to the financial situation of the colony, the correct appreciation of which by all of us is essential if our decisions are to be both wise and practical. I do not wish to anticipate the Budget statement for 1948 which will be laid before you in a few days' time, and which together with the Draft Estimates will require your immediate consideration and almost continuous sittings in Council and Committee during the first weeks of the new year. But there are certain general observations on the situation which I should like to make now, and which I hope will be helpful to you in assessing the true position. One thing is certain, namely, that we shall be able to balance our Budget for 1947, thanks to a gratifying if adventitious buoyancy in revenue collections during the current year. This, as you probably realize, derives from the unexpectedly heavy volume of imported consumer goods of all kinds which came to hand almost continuously throughout the year and resulted in a correspondingly heavy increase in the yield of Customs duties; though I must in parenthesis remind you that the bulk of these increased imports came from North

America, or in other words the very sources in respect of which we must now impose restrictions. The present position is, however, that notwithstanding very considerable supplementary expenditure imposed on us during this year by the continually rising cost of maintaining public services under prevailing conditions, the primary objective of securing a balanced budget and retaining intact our existing surplus, which was our aim a year ago, will have been achieved. The importance of continuing to fulfil this aim cannot be over-estimated. I have already referred to our Development Plan and to the means by which it is to be financed. As I have stated, apart from drawing upon the existing surplus balance (to the extent of some \$3 million) the main basis on which this Plan will rest is the raising of a loan or loans—and this within the near future—of some \$10,000,000. The successful carrying out of a financial operation of this magnitude will demand a status of absolute financial stability and integrity on the part of the colony, and this is an additional reason for ensuring that during the coming year and thereafter the budget should remain in balance; and this notwithstanding that the initiation of the Plan will itself, even at the commencement, involve additional recurrent expenditure on Public Services. I have spoken of the present buoyancy of revenue collections, but I have also emphasized that this favourable situation will inevitably deteriorate when the impact of the import restrictions that must be faced begins to make itself felt. In this situation it will be necessary to demand some sacrifice from all, and particularly from those most able to bear it.

The conclusion which may be drawn is that our present internal financial situation is sound. We have with some assistance from His Majesty's Government, particularly in regard to subsidisation, come through the war years and the difficult immediate post-war period with a substantial revenue surplus of over \$5,000,000, and have at the same time maintained and even expanded the level of public and social services. Our problem now is to maintain that favourable position in the face of economic difficulties—perhaps even more intense than those which we surmounted during the war. Let us show that we are equal to this new effort.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION.

As to legislation, and the enactment of it is this Council's prime function, there are a number of Bills of which the Attorney General has given notice today of first readings, some of them important and some of them formal, but all of which must be passed before the end of the year, and I propose, therefore, that we should proceed to consideration of them tomorrow. Early in the new year there will be introduced the various revenue measures connected with the budget: as you probably know the Income Tax and certain other taxation Ordinances are inoperative after the close of the current year, and their early re-enactment with or without amendment is therefore imperative. Apart from these a number of other important measures will be introduced early in this session. Among the most important of them will be a comprehensive and up to date measure to provide for the formation of Co-operative Societies in the colony, and to regulate their operation. I have at various times referred publicly to the importance which I attach to the development on sound lines of the Co-operative Movement in this colony, and I shall be addressing a separate message to you on the subject very soon. Other legislation will include a Children and Young Persons Bill to carry into effect *inter alia* the recommendations of the 1944 report of the Advisory Social Welfare Committee on the revision of the law relating to children and young persons. An Extra Mural Sentence Bill will also be introduced to provide that where sentence of imprisonment is imposed the Court shall, in certain cases, be empowered to direct that commitment to prison shall be suspended on the performance by the offender of public work outside the prison. The object of this Bill is to prevent, as far as possible, the stigma attached to imprisonment from falling on first offenders. A Bill will also be introduced authorising the grant of licences for utilisation of the waters of any of the waterways of the colony for the purpose of generating electric energy for industrial and other purposes. Other measures of importance to commerce and industry include a comprehensive Merchant Shipping Bill, a Companies Bill designed to bring local companies legislation into line with the existing English law, and a Mining Consolidation Ordinance.

Apart from this and other proposed

legislation it will be necessary for this Council to make up its mind early in the session on the attitude it should adopt towards the Montego Bay resolutions for closer association of Caribbean territories. On this question I shall consult you separately as soon as possible.

LABOUR'S REPRESENTATION.

Now may I say just a word about labour. This is perhaps the first time that labour has, by the popular vote, been represented, and, I trust, adequately represented in this Council. It is both right and most desirable that it should be well represented, and I sincerely trust that in the result this representation will lead to better all round understanding. It is not of course in any sense of the word a substitute for healthy and responsible Trade Union movement. Trade Unionism, and it is as well that all concerned should recognise the fact, has come to stay, and its development on properly conducted lines must be acknowledged as a part of our social system. And let us all be clear in our minds as to what Trade Unionism is. Its fundamental object is to obtain by collective effort improved conditions of employment for the working classes, improvements in regard to hours of work, wages and security. No one can quarrel with that laudable object, provided the workmen play their part and fulfil their obligations to their employers. The Trade Union movement in British Guiana has already shown its ability to negotiate successfully with employers, and there has been evidence of commendable effort and honest endeavour on both sides to come to amicable and equitable settlement of disputes without recourse to strikes or lockouts, which have shown themselves to be so costly to both parties. This spirit augurs well for the future. The Government's policy has been, and will continue to be, not only to recognise Trades Unions but to foster their healthy growth and to provide by law the machinery to facilitate the settlement of disputes, and in a manner securing to both parties a square deal.

DEMAND FOR LABOUR.

I have been wondering what the effect of the economic crisis will be on unemployment. It is fortunate indeed that at present we have no serious unemployment problem, though I am aware that there is

a certain amount of it and of under-employment, more particularly in Georgetown. It is a situation difficult to remedy, and made more difficult by movement into the town of labour from the country. What surely we want is the very reverse of that movement. While there is more labour in Georgetown than it can or is likely to be able to support, I am continually hearing stories of shortages of labour and of more work being available than is being taken advantage of in the country parts, where all our major industries are. There is, for example, a serious shortage of edible oil, and the coconut producers blame it on to the fact that they cannot get sufficient labour to harvest their nuts. If that is the true cause surely it can and must be remedied. Part of the trouble is of course that the demand for labour in our agricultural industries is so very seasonal, and the problem is not one for which there is any easy solution. The question we must ask ourselves is whether there is any real reason why any able-bodied person in the colony need be unemployed, under employed or unprofitably employed if he will but go where employment is available and labour most urgently needed. But that is not in Georgetown. I trust that Honourable Members of this Council will give the matter their serious thought, and I should welcome any constructive proposals they may be able to make which will provide a real and permanent solution of the problem.

A great deal of what I have said to you this morning is not new to you, and my excuse for saying it and emphasising it again is its importance. I have endeavoured to draw in bold outline a picture of the situation which confronts us, of what I conceive to be the main lines of action to meet it, and of the broad policy which we should adopt. In drawing this picture I have been most anxious not to minimise the difficulties which are many and complex, nor magnify the possibilities which are great if we will but throw the united weight of our wisdom and effort into the tasks which lie ahead. And it is on these high levels that I would earnestly ask all Members of this Council to concentrate and to contribute their utmost. For myself, I am confident that there is a much brighter future for British Guiana, and that it can ours and in the measure that our efforts deserve it. Nor is that confidence based on any wishful thinking, but on a firm belief in the worth of this coun-

and its people. In all our deliberations let us have a truly colony-wide outlook and refuse point blank to tolerate action prompted by unworthy motives or self interest, which might endanger the march forward of our country. To this end you can rely on me and on the officers of Government to contribute our share to the utmost of our ability. I ask you likewise to contribute yours.

PROTEST RE NOMINATION OF
DEFEATED CANDIDATES

Mr. LEE: Sir, on behalf of my brother Councillors I desire to express our thanks to you for your very interesting speech this morning, and to ask you, as is customary, to have it printed and circulated among Members of the Council so that we may study it and keep it for reference for our future guidance.

I wish also to ask you, Sir, to permit me to have placed on record a protest, which I will read, on behalf of the British Guiana Labour Party:

"I desire on behalf of the British Guiana Labour Party to record our strong protest against your acceptance of the principle of nominating to this Honourable Council persons who have been defeated at the Polls."

"The Labour Party, the British Guiana Trades Union Council, the British Guiana East Indian Association, and other leading organisations

were unanimous in advocating that this undemocratic principle should not be accepted by the Government."

"Notwithstanding this, however, Your Excellency saw it fit to nominate to this Council someone who has just been defeated at the Polls. In the name of the Labour Party I strongly protest against the inclusion of a defeated candidate, which is an open and flagrant disregard of the wishes of the people."

27/5/41
"I further desire to call Your Excellency's attention to Lord Moyne's circular despatch of 1940 when he was Secretary of State for the Colonies. His Lordship then advocated that no person should be nominated to the Legislative Council for more than two periods, or more than eight years"

That is the protest which I desire to be recorded in Hansard for the future guidance of all democratic forms of government — that any person who has taken the risk of going to the polls, and has been defeated, should not be nominated to this Council for that period, or even a short period. If Your Excellency will have your speech printed and circulated, as I have asked, the new Councillors will always have a copy at their right hand for reference. On their behalf I sincerely thank you again for the very interesting speech you have delivered this morning.

The PRESIDENT: The Council will now adjourn until 2 o'clock to-morrow.